

Sharing Christ

Getting Started

⇒ *What did you learn from this week's reading? What are two or three things that struck you the most?*

⇒ *Think through the people in your life who are not Christ-followers (e.g. at work, school, family, neighborhood, etc.). What do you think are some of the first words, images, or impressions that come to their minds when they hear the word "Christian"?*

Sharing Christ

The First Step

⇒ Are You _____ The _____ ... You're _____
_____ To _____?

Most people won't come right out and say it, but you'd better believe they're thinking it. They're not interested in committing their lives to Christ unless they observe attractive and consistent patterns of living in the Christians they know . . . Though it's tempting, to run ahead and talk about the practical tips for communicating our faith would be premature. You see before we can become highly contagious Christians, we must first live in a way that convinces the people around us that we actually have the disease ourselves.

(Bill Hybels & Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming A Contagious Christian*)

The best argument for Christianity is Christians: their joy, their certainty, their completeness. But the strongest argument *against* Christianity is also Christians - when they are somber and joyless, when they are self-righteous and smug in complacent consecration, when they are narrow and repressive, then Christianity dies a thousand deaths.

(Sheldon VanAueken, *A Severe Mercy*)

Living The Life

Eight Key Traits

1) _____

We . . . are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25)

2) _____

Inauthenticity among the ranks of those claiming to be Christians can become an almost insurmountable barrier to belief. (Bill Hybels, *Becoming A Contagious Christian*)

3) _____

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

When Christians sync their words and deeds to the good news of the gospel, they chip away, bit by bit at the negative attitudes and opinions held by non-Christians. In other words, if Christians want non-Christians to dialogue with them, they must be the sort of people to whom others are drawn by seeing integrity in every facet of their lives. Integrity is the baseline for good evangelism. (Priscilla Pope-Levison, *5 Essential Qualities of Effective Evangelism*)

4) _____

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)

God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7, *New Living Translation*)

I've learned through the years that seekers are not impressed with spinelessness. I need to emphasize this because many Christians are so afraid that if they state what they really believe, if they come out of the closet, or if they live by biblical principles, then they'll automatically alienate those outside the faith. But that's almost never the case. Most of the time, seekers, whether they admit it openly or not, respect and admire Christians who aren't afraid to take a stand. Don't forget, many of them are trying to make up their own minds about what to do with the claims of Christ. So when a believer speaks up for what is right, defends Christianity intelligently, or lives his faith openly and authentically, seekers are forced to deal with the implications for their own lives. . . . Let me say it once more: seekers have little respect for weak Christians. Deep down they're looking for somebody - anybody - to step up and proclaim the truth and then to live it boldly. (Bill Hybels & Mark Mittleberg, *Becoming A Contagious Christian*)

5) _____

John 13:34-35/Luke 10:25-37

One of the primary reasons God calls His followers to be extraordinarily caring people is because acts of mercy open up people's hearts like nothing else can. Put another way, there's a tremendous pulling power in the expression of even a single act of kindness. And God wants that power to draw people to the reality of His Son. . . . Whether the problem is with the organization or the individual, uncaring Christianity does not attract inquirers into its fold. But a clear and consistent demonstration of Christlike love is a powerful magnet that pulls people toward Him.

(Bill Hybels & Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming A Contagious Christian*)

We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

Few will listen to the Gospels without first experiencing genuine care, concern, and compassion. People who would share their faith with others need not only their faith convictions, but they also need true and honest compassion for those they talk to. (Mark Richardson, *Compassionate Evangelism*)

6) _____

The tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” (Luke 15:1-2)

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and ‘sinners’.” (Luke 7:34)

Nobody will listen to you unless they sense that you like them. If a person senses you don’t like them, that you don’t approve of their existence, then your religions and political ideas will all seem wrong to them. If they sense that you like them, then they are open to what you have to say. . . . (Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz*)

7) _____

The Bible says that everything about you can be explained by your passions. It’s why adult men will wear football shirts, hats, and paint our faces. We’ll do all kinds of weird things. It’s because we were created for passion. So we will displace that passion in the oddest places. That’s why we’ll be passionate for money, passionate for success, passionate for prestige, passionate for all kinds of odd things. You were created to be passionate and until you place that passion properly in the heart of God you will have irrational displaced passions. . . . When you make God your delight, your focus, your priority, your epicenter, then you can live an unrestrained, insane, exciting, passionate life. I guarantee you that’s what people in this world are desperately looking for. They’re looking for men and women who are fully alive, who suck the marrow out of every moment. Those are the kinds of individuals that magnetically draw those who are lost to God. And that’s exactly what Jesus does when we make him our first love. (Erwin McManus)

8) _____

The problem with the Christian isn’t that he has answers; it’s that he has *too many* answers. Christians often have deeply held convictions about capital punishment, criminal justice, welfare reform, economics, and political theory. Too often we are convinced that each opinion is the *truly* biblical position. As a result, Christians seem to have *a lot* of opinions, and we’re in danger of appearing arrogant and inflexible in an age of tolerance. (Tim Downs, *Finding Common Ground*)

Your Assignment

- Read handout from *Finding Common Ground* (Tim Downs).